

**THE CHRISTIAN LIFE, THE CHURCH LIFE,
THE CONSUMMATION OF THE AGE, AND THE COMING OF THE LORD**

(Lord's Day—First Morning Session)

Message Seven

**Fighting the Good Fight, Finishing the Course,
and Loving the Lord's Appearing**

Scripture Reading: 2 Tim. 4:7-8, 10; 1 Tim. 1:4, 18; 6:12; Acts 20:24; Heb. 12:1-2

I. "I have fought the good fight"—2 Tim. 4:7a:

- A. A proper Christian life involves fighting the good fight against Satan and his kingdom of darkness and for the interests of God's kingdom—Eph. 6:10-19.
- B. Paul considered the ministry a warfare for Christ, just as the priestly service was considered a military service, a warfare—2 Tim. 2:3; Num. 4:23, 30, 35.
- C. "No one serving as a soldier entangles himself with the affairs of this life"; this means that to fight the good fight for God's interests on earth, we need to clear away all earthly entanglements—2 Tim. 2:4.
- D. Paul charged Timothy, his faithful co-worker, to fight against the differing teachings and to fight for God's economy—1 Tim. 6:12; 2 Tim. 2:3-4.
- E. To war the good warfare is to war against the differing teachings and to carry out God's economy according to the apostle's ministry concerning the gospel of grace and eternal life for the glory of the blessed God—1 Tim. 1:18; 6:12.
- F. Whenever we minister Christ to others, we find ourselves in a battle; hence, we should be soldiers fighting for God's interests—2 Tim. 2:3-4.
- G. To teach and preach God's New Testament economy concerning Christ and the church is to war the good warfare—1 Tim. 1:4; Eph. 5:32.
- H. To fight the good fight of the faith means to fight for God's New Testament economy; in particular, it is to fight for Christ as the embodiment of God and for the church as the Body of Christ—1 Tim. 6:12; 1:4; Col. 2:9, 19.
- I. We fight the good fight of the faith not only objectively but also subjectively by laying hold on the eternal life—1 Tim. 6:12.

II. "I have finished the course"—2 Tim. 4:7b:

- A. "I consider my life of no account as if precious to myself, in order that I may finish my course and the ministry which I have received from the Lord Jesus"—Acts 20:24:
 - 1. Paul began to run the course of the heavenly race after he was taken possession of by the Lord, and he ran continually that he might finish it—1 Cor. 9:24-26; Phil. 3:12-14.
 - 2. It was not until the last moment of his running the race that the apostle Paul could triumphantly proclaim, "I have finished the course," and have the assurance that he would be rewarded by the Lord at His appearing—2 Tim. 4:7-8.
- B. A proper Christian life involves running the course, the race, for the carrying out of God's economy according to His eternal purpose—1 Cor. 9:24.

- C. We need to seek out the journey that the Lord has ordained and faithfully walk on it, paying any price to wholeheartedly continue on our journey until we reach the end—2 Tim. 4:7.
- D. The journey that the Lord has ordained for us is the race that we all must run—Heb. 12:1:
 - 1. After we are saved, God puts us into a race, which is aimed directly at the kingdom—2 Tim. 4:1b.
 - 2. We cannot choose the course that we want to run; rather, we must run the race that God sets before us—Acts 20:24.
- E. We need to “run with endurance the race which is set before us”—Heb. 12:1:
 - 1. Like the apostle Paul, all Christians must run the race to win the prize, not salvation in the common sense but a reward in a special sense—10:35; 1 Cor. 3:14-15; 9:26-27; Phil. 3:13-14.
 - 2. We need to run the race with endurance, suffering the opposition with endurance and never growing weary or fainting in our souls—Heb. 12:2-3.
- F. We run the Christian race by “looking away unto Jesus, the Author and Perfecter of our faith”—v. 2:
 - 1. Jesus is the Author of faith—the Originator, the Inaugurator, the source, and the cause of faith—v. 2:
 - a. We need to look away unto Jesus with undivided attention by turning away from every other object—vv. 1-2; S. S. 1:4; Psa. 27:4.
 - b. When we look away unto Jesus, He as the life-giving Spirit (1 Cor. 15:45b) transfuses us with Himself, with His believing element.
 - 2. Jesus is the Perfecter of faith—the Finisher and Completer of faith—Heb. 12:2:
 - a. As the Completer of faith, the Lord Jesus continually infuses Himself into us as the believing element and ability—Acts 7:2; Gen. 15:6.
 - b. When we look away unto Him, He ministers heaven, life, and strength to us, transfusing and infusing us with all that He is so that we may be able to run the heavenly race and live the heavenly life on earth—2 Cor. 3:18.
 - c. As we look away unto Him continually, He will finish and complete the faith that we need to run the heavenly race—Heb. 12:1-2.

III. If the Lord’s second coming is precious to us, we will love His appearing—2 Tim. 4:8:

- A. Loving the Lord’s appearing and loving the Lord Himself are inseparable—1 Cor. 2:9; 2 Tim. 4:8.
- B. If we are waiting for the Lord to come, we should be those who love His appearing—1 Thes. 1:10; 2 Tim. 4:8.
- C. The Lord’s appearing, His coming back, is a warning, an encouragement, and an incentive to us—vv. 1, 18:
 - 1. We should love the Lord’s appearing and look forward to it with earnest expectation and joy—Rev. 22:20.
 - 2. We should have a living that loves the Lord’s appearing; this causes us not to be discouraged but to remain faithful to the end—2 Tim. 4:8; Rev. 17:14.

- D. Loving the Lord's appearing is in contrast to loving the present age—2 Tim. 4:8, 10:
1. An age is a part, a section, or an aspect of the world system of Satan, which is used by him to usurp and occupy people and keep them away from God and His purpose—1 John 5:19; 2:15.
 2. In 2 Timothy 4:10 *the present age* refers to the world that surrounds, attracts, and tempts us; we cannot contact the world unless we contact the present age of the world.
 3. Demas loved the present age; due to the attraction of the present age, he forsook the apostle Paul—v. 10.
 4. In Romans 12:2 Paul exhorts us to not be fashioned according to this age but to be transformed by the renewing of the mind:
 - a. *This age* in verse 2 denotes the present, practical part of the world, which stands in opposition to the Body life and replaces the Body life—vv. 4-5.
 - b. To be fashioned according to this age means to adopt the modern fashions of the present age; to be transformed is to allow an organic element to be wrought into our being, thus producing an inward metabolic change—v. 2; 2 Cor. 3:18.
 - c. Because the present age opposes the church, which is God's will, we must not be fashioned according to it—Rom. 12:2.
 - d. If we are to live in the Body of Christ, we should not follow the present age or be fashioned according to this age or conformed to it—vv. 4-5.
 5. If we love the present age, we will take sides with the world; if we love the Lord's appearing, we will take sides with Him and fight with Him for His interests—2 Tim. 4:1-2, 4-8, 10.
- E. Those who love the Lord, wait for His coming, and love His appearing will overcome—1 Cor. 2:9; 2 Tim. 4:8; Rev. 22:20; 17:14.
- F. Loving the Lord's appearing is a proof that we love the Lord and live for Him today; hence, it also becomes a condition for us to receive His reward—2 Tim. 4:8, 18.
- G. To love the Lord's appearing does not mean that we should not live a normal life; rather, the more we love His appearing, the more we need to live a normal life today—Matt. 24:40-42; 2 Thes. 1:10; 3:6-12; 1 Tim. 5:8.
- H. As those who love the Lord Jesus, take Him as our life, live Him, and magnify Him, we should await His coming and love His appearing; this should be our heart's desire and our living as those who hope to enter into His joy, be saved into the Lord's heavenly kingdom, and receive the crown of righteousness—2 Tim. 4:8, 18.

Excerpts from the Ministry:

Life-study of 2 Timothy, pp. 57-63